

Tips for Removing Car Window Tinting

How to Remove Tint from Car Windows using Steam, Plastic and Razorblades

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Removing tinted film from car windows is simple, however the amount of time required for removal may vary. The primary goal of these instructions is to focus on pulling the maximum amount of glue from the windows while detaching the tinted film. The less glue remaining on windows after the film pulls away means less work required to complete the job. Read these instructions all the way through before starting the tint removal process.

Understanding Window Tint Makeup

Two layers of material make up the construction of auto window tint. The top layer contains the color, or shade, the tint displays once spread across a window. The clear bottom layer holds the glue that sticks the tint to the windows. Since the top layer does not adhere to the glue or any other sticky substance, it is much easier to remove than the bottom layer that encompasses the glue. These instructions will discuss two different ways to remove tint and glue from windows. Method 1 explains removing tint using a steamer. Method 2 utilizes sheets of dark plastic.

Two Tint Removal Approaches

Method 1 instructions require use of a handheld steamer, one or more sharp razorblades, strong window goop remover, and a clean soft cloth. Using this method, hot water spray (steam) blowing from the steamer melts the glue on the underside of

the tinted film. The idea is to melt the glue as thoroughly as possible so that it easily detaches from the window.

Step one—Cover areas below windows with plastic to protect them from cleaning products. This is especially important when working on windows above leather doors and when removing tint from rearview windows. Dry cleaning hanger bags, trash bags, or large plastic shopping bags will suffice. Simply separate each bag at its seams and spread it across areas of the vehicle needing protection. Use more than one bag per window if necessary.

Step two—Prepare the steamer for use according to its instructions for operation. Once the steamer is ready, turn it on to get the steam flowing. If working on a side window, roll it down a few inches. Then hold the steamer within an inch or two of the uppermost part of the window tint and let the steam blast away at the film. Slowly move the steamer from one side of the window to the other. Once the top edge is done blast the window up and down or left to right approximately six to eight inches from the top edge.

Step three—By now the top section of film should be loose enough to peel. Use one of the sharp razorblades to scrape a bit of tint away from the top corner of the window. Do this by inserting the razor blade between the film and the window. Scrape away just enough film to grab onto with a thumb and forefinger.

Step four—Put the razor blade down in a safe location. Grab the scraped corner of film with one hand and use the other hand to continue steaming the window. Pull the tint down in a diagonal direction. Continue steaming and pulling the tint simultaneously. Steaming and pulling each section at the same time keeps the glue behind the tint warm. This is crucial because when the glue cools down the ease of removing the tint lessens.

Continue pulling the tint all the way down and across the width of window. Then roll the window up completely and continue the process down its remaining area.

Step five—This step calls for removing leftover glue from the window with goop remover and razorblades. Do this by wiping or spraying the goop remover across the entirety of the window. Then, using a sharp razorblade, carefully scrape the goop and glue from the window as if shaving someone's face.

When performing this step, move the razor blade quickly through the glue in downward swipes. Take care not to scratch the window. It may be necessary to repeat this step in some sections of the window.

Glue that has been on windows for several years may be extra stubborn. If it is too stubborn for the goop remover, try adding a tablespoon of ammonia to one tablespoon of dishwashing liquid and eight ounces of water. Firmly wipe this solution across the gluey window with a soft cloth. The idea here is to get the glue to ball up so that it will come away from the window easier. Once the glue balls form, spray the window, and swipe it with a razorblade again.

Step six—Once all tint and glue have been removed, simply clean the windows as usual.

Method 2 instructions requires parking the vehicle in the sun, covering windows with soapy water or tint remover and dark plastic, as well as scraping windows with razorblades. The idea of this method is to heat liquid placed on the windows in order to duplicate the affect of using a handheld steamer. The temperature must be hot enough to rouse the windows into perspiring in order to help the tint and glue lift away. Temperatures above 70 degrees should suffice as long as the sun beams down on the windows undergoing the tint removal process.

Step one—Use the same instructions as in step one above to

protect interior surfaces.

Step two—Cut a dark piece of plastic into the shape of the window. Garbage bags work well. This piece of plastic is for the inside of the window. Spray, or otherwise wet the outside of the window and cover it with a sheet of plastic. This sheet should cover the entire window but does not need to fit perfectly.

Step three—Spray a mixture of dish detergent, water, and ammonia onto the inside of the window. Alternatively, spray a tint remover solution on the inside of the window. Cover this area with the plastic cutout shaped like the window. Make certain the cutout sticks to the entire surface of the window from top to bottom as well as side-to-side.

Step four—Leave the prepped window in the sun for twenty to thirty minutes. Then, use a razor blade to cut a small section of film away from the top uppermost corner of the tint. Well-prepped film that has heated long enough should peel easily away from the window.

If the tint does not come away from the window with ease, repeat step three. If the tint peels away with gentle provoking, carefully peel it down and across the window in a diagonal direction. The sheet should come off in one continuous piece. If it fails to come away easily at any point, repeat step three for the unremoved section of film.

Step five—Remove leftover glue from windows using the same technique as Method 1, step 5 above. Clean window as usual.

Auto centers and some discount stores carry tint removal spray that works to remove excess glue when using either of these processes. Certain carpet cleaners, such as 409, works as well. Laying towels or other absorbent cloth over plastic placed below rearview windows will aid in absorbing excess mist that drips from the steamer.

Tips and Warnings

Keep interiors as ventilated as possible when using ammonia or tint removal spray while working inside a vehicle. Do not remain inside a vehicle while the sun is heating the windows; however, close all doors and windows to aid the steaming process. Do not allow windows to dry out after liquefying and covering them with plastic. Windows must remain moist in order for glue to loosen and stay loose through the peeling process. Do not scrape defrosting or defogging lines with razorblades—use cloth to remove glue in lined areas. Wear protective masks to aid breathing when using ammonia or removal spray. Use steel wool pads if preferring not to go with razorblades.

Conclusion

As with stripping furniture, tinted film removal can be accomplished using different techniques or sets of instructions. Following chosen instructions precisely is the best way to ensure removal of all glue that attaches the film to the windows. Leftover glue could leave car windows with unsightly appearances and may be distracting to drivers.